

The Rhode Island State House Visitor's Center & Gift Shop Board of Directors

**Secretary of State's Office of Public Information – Conference Room
State House Room 38**

Tuesday April 23, 2013

10:00 A.M.

Approved Meeting Minutes

1. Paul Caranci called the inaugural meeting of the Board of Directors to order at 10:10 A.M. with the following board members present:

Sue Ellen Kroll (RI Council on the Humanities), Kristen Adamo (Providence/Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau) and Jonathan Stevens (Governor's Office). Stacy DiCola and Chris Barnett (Secretary of State's Office) and Jess Unger (Governor's Office) were also in attendance.

2. The members and guests present introduced themselves.

3. Stacy DiCola distributed certificates of engagement that each of the board members present completed and returned to her for filing.

4. Paul Caranci provided a brief overview of the visitor center/gift shop history and purpose noting that the enabling legislation authorizes the establishment of a Center to be operated by the Secretary of State under the direction of a 5 member board of directors. The day to day operation will be performed by J & W students under an arrangement similar to that of the State House tour guide program. While the legislature approved the establishment of a

visitors center/gift shop along with the establishment of a restricted receipt account (maximum \$50,000), it did not provide state funding for its operation. Secretary Mollis is concerned about the ability to fund the facility long term (minimum 2-3 years) and would prefer to delay the opening until funding can be secured. To that end, initial year funding was procured through agreements with Johnson & Wales University and the Providence Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau. The University will not charge the \$33,000 price for student services as originally discussed, but instead agreed to provide the student services as a type of in-kind contribution even absorbing the \$1,000 per student stipend. The Center will operate from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday thru Friday, fifty weeks per year. The University may consider extending the arrangement into the second year if need be. In addition, the PWCVB will provide funding of \$15,000 for inventory and set-up costs. They will also entertain the possibility of extending their funding into a second year. Director Adamo indicated that providing long term-reliable funding, other than from the sale of inventory, needs to be an integral part of the mission of the board. Directors Kroll and Adamo identified the type of grants that might be available for such a purpose and Director Kroll will help keep the board informed as such opportunities present themselves.

5. The board members present, upon a motion by Director Adamo and seconded by Director Kroll, unanimously voted to delay the appointment of a board chairperson until a meeting at which all the members are present.

6. The board engaged a discussion of visitor center/gift shop design

and operations noting the there is a need to review and discuss issues such as special design, fixtures, equipment and supplies, staffing and oversight, inventory needs, and operations management.

Several people were identified that may be able to provide assistance in this regard. They include Alicia Phillipe (PWCVB), Kerri Furtado (PWCVB), Bob Billington (BVTC), Kathy Vanderveer (NHS), Jennifer Bailey (Discover Newport), Cathy Morrison (Discover Newport), and Mark Brodeur (RI State Tourism Division). Director Adamo will provide a complete list of suggestions and Paul Caranci will arrange a meeting with those identified who might be able to assemble as a work group in an advisory capacity. Stacy DiCola will determine if a meeting of that work group will need to be reported under the requirements of public meetings. All of the people mentioned have expertise in visitor center and/or gift shop management and operations and can assist the board with advice on all the implementation. Director Adamo also confirmed that PWCVB may be able to purchase an additional supply of items that can then be donated to the State House Gift Shop in lieu of the cash contribution. These items could be used as initial inventory to the State House Visitors Center & Gift Shop allowing us to take advantage of the lower cost that comes with larger sales orders. There would be a need to do that before the money is transferred into the restricted receipts account and will need to take that action prior to the June 30th fiscal year ending.

7. The board members visited room 140 where the gift shop will be located to view the space and the furniture and fixtures that have

been accumulated. There are currently 2 glass display cases and 4 book cases in the room which measure approximately 10' X 20'. Paul Caranci reported that Betty Capozzi of Modern Industries has offered to donate up to five glass display cases (3 mahogany-style finish and 2 oak-style finish) for our use. Director Stevens suggested that the group view the display cases at Modern Industries to determine how many and which ones would be most desirable. Director Kroll said that the design of the space would be a perfect project for the design students at RISD. Director Stevens will draft a one-page RFP and Director Kroll will contact someone from the Industrial Design School at RISD to see if we can procure a student's services prior to the end of the school year. Director Stevens will also follow up with Marco Schiappa to see if the book cases described by Stacy DiCola are still available for our use.

8. No meeting date was set. Paul Caranci will report back to the group when he speaks with the identified task group members to determine the next meeting date.

9. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.